4 Villa Rojas E-4.5 (1938-1944) 1969 NV9 Tzeltal NV9

Tenejapa

291
301
531

FIG. 1.—FARAJE REPRESENTATIVES VISITING THE CEREMONIAL CENTER OF TENEJAPA. (Copyright, Gertrude Duby.)

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4. Villa Rojas E-4,5 (1938-1944) 1969 NV9 Tzeltal NV9

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FIG. 2—TENEJAPA WOMAN AND CHILD.—(Copyright, Gertrude Duby.)

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5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Tenango

one piece with its stand, which is then called *cOt*, and a pot with one or two spouts and a handle on top called *bur nia* (figs. 317-319).

The decoration is fairly standardized. In the big cantaras each woman uses a central element of her own, and all follow the same general scheme. Occasionally a potter breaks out with an odd form, such as an undersized cantara which we bought. It has a row of pellets about the rim, called *tut-cuH*, "little beads"; around the center is a zone of galloping animals showing considerable action, but difficult to identify. When we asked what the animals were, the woman replied rather wearily that they were "to make it pretty," so we let it go at that (fig. 318).

Fig. 316—Tenango Jar. (45 c.m. high).

The clay used is a light, greenish brown colour, and lumpy before being prepared. It is tempered with ground, sandy limestone, *hiH-ton* ("sand-stone") of fine quality. The jar is painted with a paste made of a soft,

Fig. 317—Tenango, Chis. Types of Pottery.
A. Burnia. B. Ocom. C. Yocwalata'a. D. cOt.

Fig. 318—Tenango, Chis. Central designs from jars.

black stone, *tsa-ik* (*ik* equals "black") ground and mixed with water. It is laid on with the soft, green tip of a bush called *Hxamal*.*

The women's *huipiles* and all the men's clothes are woven at Tenango by the women. The men's sashes, which they make, are not as finely woven as among the Bachajon. They are undecorated

* To make a cantara—*ma-k'in*. To paint a cantara—*xix-k'in*. To bake cantaras—*mukuk k ib-tik* (*tik* is the emphatic plural; they are always baked in large batches).

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Cancuc

that he was invited into her house, presumably to take shelter from the evening rain that was beginning to fall. The house, of which he sketched a hurried plan (fig. 324) was more rectangular than is usual, the prevailing type being square with a pyramidal roof. He entered through a low doorway, closed with a wooden door on leather hinges. Although the ridge of the roof was high, the many cross poles reaching from the top of one wall to the other made it necessary to stoop. The writer squatted by the door, facing the fire, which smoked merrily in the closed room. The old woman immediately set to shaping a pile of tortillas for baking. Along either wall was a well-made bench, decorated with notches along the top and geometric designs on the back, similar to the benches on the Cabildo porch (fig. 325). These and a sturdy table that was stored on top of the stringers were said to be purely local products. By the door stood a big jar, a full meter in height, crude and undecorated (fig. 326). There was the usual collection of ollas and gourds, and one other new form, an open-mouthed pot about eight centimeters high and as many in diameter, flat bottomed, with a handle on one side, called *hütc* (fig. 327). In the thick smoke, it was hard to see anything. I was interested to note that my hostess' eyes watered nearly as much as my own. In the darker end of the house I could make out corn stacked neatly along one wall, and a partition that presumably hid the beds. For a while the woman answered the few questions that I could make her understand by means of signs, my half-a-dozen words of Tzeltal,

Fig. 323—Cancuc, Chis. Drinking scaffold.

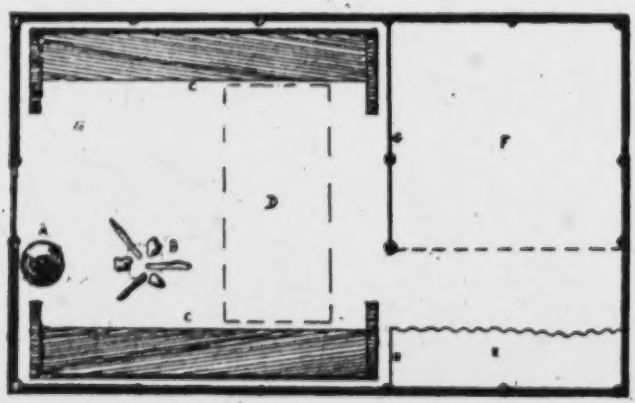


Fig. 324—Cancuc, Chis. Plan of House.

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Cancuc

and her three words of Spanish. Then she grew hostile, answering everything with a plaintive "*Ma snaa,*" "I don't know." This went on for two or three minutes, then suddenly she flung open the door and waved me out with no uncertain gesture, saying something about the "Presidente Municipal," and the "Secretario." By this time it was pouring cats and dogs, but there was nothing to do save run for it.

Cancuc is not noted for any product. There are about the same arts and industries as at other towns, but the only ones that amount to anything like a specialty are netmaking and whittling combs. The combs are better and more neatly made than those of the Bachajon, and with a selection of the wood for grain that often produces very pretty combinations. The nets are made by the men, who

Fig. 325—Cancuc, Chis. Bench.

Fig. 327. Cancuc, Chis. Pottery Hilito (8 c.m. high).

Fig. 326—Cancuc, Chis. Tall Jar. (1 m. high).

go about rolling the twine or knitting as they walk. The process was described in the last chapter.

Being on the main highway, the government maintains a long shed, like a wagon-shed, thatched with leaves and grass, which is at the disposal of travelers. This relieves the Maestro of duties of entertainment. Towards nightfall, various groups came into camp here—a family of Mexicans, with a big fire, and goods piled high, two traders with their packs, some Chamulas, fine-looking men dressed in white wool tunics, with flowing cotton kerchiefs round their heads, and a couple of Tenejapeños with nets full of apples. The Chamulas, who are remarkably progressive Indians, had come in with a string of mules. After dark, the line of fires in the divisions of the shed, the talk, the fire-lit figures in their varied costumes, with the Church and houses rising on the terraced hill behind made as picturesque and charming a scene as one could possibly imagine.

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Tenejapa

shadow, another wall far behind. A Mexican told us that Tenejapa lay in the valley thus enclosed. With the cool evening air our animals picked up, taking us along at a good trot. We swung around a green dell, up under one cliff into the opening, over the threshold of a ridge. Some Indians sitting there waved to us. Beyond was a tiny, lush meadow and a brook where some Mexicans were making clay tiles. There was another rocky hillock, around which we swung to find ourselves trotting down a well-cobbled street lined with little white cottages, white-walled gardens, and roses. To us, looking for something yet wilder than the villages we had seen, the neat houses and candle-lit casement windows, the doors of tiny shops, the flowers, and the shingled roofs were an utter surprise. In the streets was a sprinkling of touselled-headed Indians

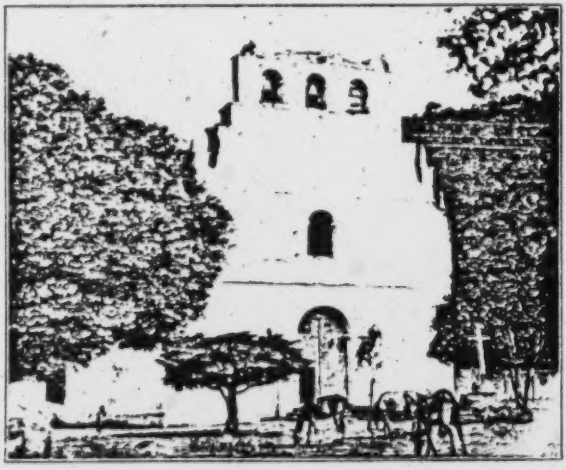


FIG. 329—Tenejapa, Chis. Church and Plaza.

and Ladino people of much fairer complexion than the typical, Lowland Mexicans. We rode past a gaunt, high-shouldered stone church into the plaza, a field of about two acres planted with a few trees, and with a fine town fountain of icy water in the middle (fig. 328). Along one side ran the Cabildo, a long, one-storied building with a very deep veranda, gorgeously painted in cubist fashion, red, yellow, green and blue. Here we halted to unpack and present our credentials to the *Presidente Municipal*.

Tenejapa is really two towns in one. There is the Ladino town, around which lie the houses of some eight thousand Indians, by local

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Tenejapa

shorts are also usually embroidered in red and yellow. The chief had such a pair, very fine and gaudy, which we asked to see. He took them off to show us, but when we tried to buy them from him he became furiously angry and abusive. Sandals, when worn, are of the ordinary type. Most of the Indians carry a staff of some kind.

The women wear the typical blue skirt, but the blouse, cut like a poncho, is usually tucked inside and heavily embroidered about the neck and shoulders. This work takes a long time, and the finished blouses are valued very highly. When worn outside they nearly cover the skirts, which are just knee length. Red sashes with a yellow stripe from Tapachula, of the kind worn also around Ocosingo, bind the skirts at the waist. Hair is done in two braids with dark red ribbon, or tied up in a knot over the forehead as at Cancuc.

Fig. 330—Tenejapa, Chis. Indians in the street.

Men and women alike wear cheap, gay-coloured necklaces, usually rosaries.

The Indians move with great freedom through the town and lounge in company with the Ladinos on the broad porch of the Town Hall. The officials are distinguished by silver-headed canes with black tassels. In lieu of a Maestro, they are directly under the Ladino *Presidente Municipal*, and their disputes are tried by the local judge. Their lawsuits have a mediaeval air, carried on publicly with great clamor on the Town Hall porch, and all concerned speaking with the utmost freedom. A breach of promise case was observed in the course of trial. It went on for at least two hours with never less than two Indians, usually women, speaking at once. One could not but admire the patience of the rather bored and indifferent judge.

The cargadores from Cancuc arrived shortly after dark, still lively despite the long day and steep climb. More remarkable still,

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Tenejapa
Amatenango

one of them had developed fever, "so that he lost his breath," and another had made almost the whole trip with two kayaks, over 200 lbs. on his back. They camped on the Town Hall porch where we, with our beds on piles of grass in a room labelled *"Comandancia,"* heard them, as we fell asleep, still chattering over a friendly bottle. Here, as long ago at Ocozotepec, our goods and saddles were stored in the jail, the room next ours, bearing the tactful label in red and blue, *"Prevencion."* Our grass beds were soft and sweet. The big door framed a little of the plaza, the fountain, a cottage with a narrow barred, candle-lit window, and the towering back-drop of cliffs behind, reaching to the stars, with one small winking fire, high up, from some Indian's house. We heard our *cargadores'* low chatter-

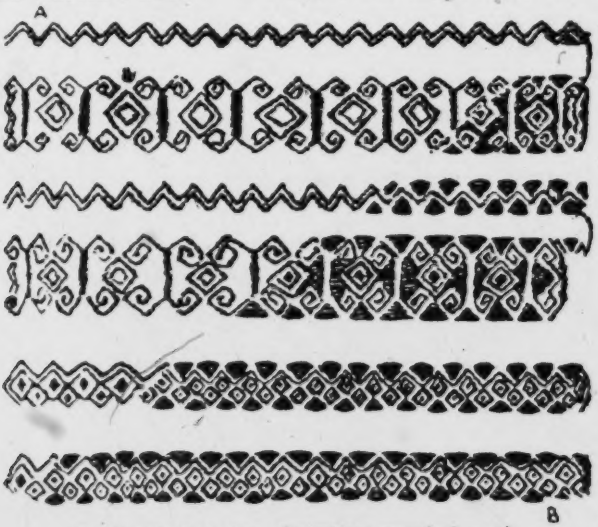


FIG. 331—Tenejapa, Chis. Embroidery on end of a sash.
A. Front. B. Back.

ing, the play of the fountain, a distant guitar. The air was fresh with pines and sweet grass and mountain coolness. We were in a magic country, and we were very, very tired.

Although it breaks the sequence of our journey, it seems best to mention the town of Amatenango here in connection with the other Highland Tzeltal tribes. We passed through it just beyond Teopisca on our way to Comitan, having no time to stop off. The people had been observed in San Cristóbal, where they come in to trade their famous pottery, men and mules alike piled high with loads twice their size.

[P.198-F]

Plate 7. Types of pottery produced:

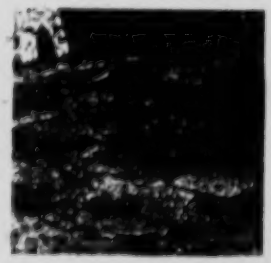
323
531
532
415

a decorated water pitcher

b water storage jar

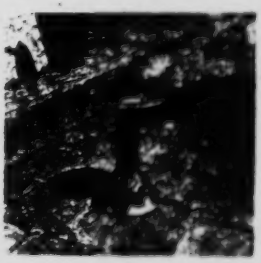
c bowl

d water-carrying jar



e toy: man astride donkey

f flower holder shaped in form of duck



g candle holder

h vase on an ashtray, pedestal with three frogs

Photographs by Jean Simmons.